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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/595,037	01/09/2006	Stephane Wartel	Q92566	1677
23373	7590	03/06/2009	EXAMINER	
SUGHRUE MION, PLLC 2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W. SUITE 800 WASHINGTON, DC 20037			KAVANAUGH, JOHN T	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER			
		3728		
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03/06/2009	PAPER			

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/595,037	WARTEL ET AL.
	Examiner /Ted Kavanaugh/	Art Unit 3728

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If no period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 February 2009.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 13-22 and 25 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) 25 is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 13-18 and 20-22 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 19 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 2/2/2009 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 13-16,18,21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US 5042119 (Williams).

Williams teaches a device (170,180; see figure 8) in the form of a band having a length greater than the width, said device comprising mutual self gripping means (VELCRO), equivalent means for fixing the band to the shoe (apertures 92), and a central flat part comprising a series of orifices (24) for the laces to pass. The device is laced to the tongue and therefore is an integral part of the tongue. The device of Williams has all of the structure as claimed and therefore is inherently capable of performing all the functional language as claimed including being placed across the

shoe so that the device is perpendicular to an axial direction of said shoe when the device is placed on the shoe. The shoe is only functionally being claimed. The device of Williams is shown covering the whole loops of the shoe lace but longer shoe laces can be used with would extend beyond the device of Williams.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 17 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over either Williams '119.

Williams teaches a series of orifices (see the rejection above) except for the specific arrangement of orifices as claimed in claim 17. It would be an obvious design choice to provide the device of Williams with any combination of orifices including slits and circular orifices inasmuch as any such combination appears to be merely a design choice. This view is buttressed by applicant disclosure which show a plurality of different combination of orifices (see figures 1-9) and none of which provide a new or unexpected result.

Regarding claim 20, Williams lacks the specific material of the device, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of Williams out of one of the material listed in claim 20, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art

to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed 2-2-2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues Williams fails to disclose that the length of said device is perpendicular to an axial direction of said shoe, when said device is placed thereon.

In response, the device of Williams has all of the structure as claimed and therefore is inherently capable of performing all the functional language as claimed including being placed across the shoe so that the device is perpendicular to an axial direction of said shoe when the device is placed on the shoe. The shoe is only functionally being claimed. Moreover, the device of Williams when placed on the shoe does have a length as claimed; see figure 6.

Applicant argues the loops of the knot of the laces of Williams is completely covered by the sheath of Williams and teaches no lace portion can be put outside the sheath to avoid a bad closing of the device.

In response, independent claim 13, only functionally recites the laces and the shoe. The device of Williams has all of the structure as claimed and therefore is inherently capable of performing all the functional language as claimed including only covering the loops of the knot.

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claim 20 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

7. Claim 25 is allowed.

8. Claim 19 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

10. Applicant is duly reminded that a complete response must satisfy the requirements of 37 C.F. R. 1.111, including:

“The reply must present arguments pointing out the *specific* distinctions believed to render the claims, including any newly presented claims, patentable over any applied references.”

--“A general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references does not comply with the requirements of this section.”

-Moreover, “The prompt development of a clear issue requires that the replies of the applicant meet the objections to and rejections of the claims. Applicant should also specifically point out the support for any amendments made to the disclosure. See MPEP 2163.06” MPEP 714.02. The “disclosure” includes the claims, the specification and the drawings.

11. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). Other useful information can be obtained at the PTO Home Page at www.uspto.gov.

In order to avoid potential delays, Technology Center 3700 is encouraging FAXing of responses to Office Actions directly into the Center at (571) 273-8300 (**FORMAL FAXES ONLY**). Please identify Examiner Ted Kavanaugh of Art Unit 3728 at the top of your cover sheet.

Any inquiry concerning the MERITS of this examination from the examiner should be directed to Ted Kavanaugh whose telephone number is (571) 272-4556. The examiner can normally be reached from 6AM - 4PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mickey Yu can be reached on (571) 272-4562.

If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (In United States OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Ted Kavanaugh/
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3728

TK
March 6, 2009

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